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# Keeping in Touch

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## Representative — Jeannie — **DARNEILLE** 27<sup>th</sup> District

### Keeping in Touch

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Dear Neighbors,

July was a big month for us. New state budgets and dozens of new laws took effect that will help shape the future of our state and local community. I'm writing to share some of these.

Please take a look inside. You'll see this was a very successful year for our top local priorities—especially for education, children's programs and health care. You'll also see that new state construction investments in Pierce County will have a tremendous positive impact on our future.

Sen. Debbie Regala recently sent out an excellent legislative report on education, health care and offender reentry. I've tried to focus this report on other brand new laws and policies that will affect our future.

Even though the Legislature is not in session, please remember that I serve you all year long. Despite our reduced office hours, you can still reach me quickly through the numbers on this page. I'd welcome your thoughts, concerns and suggestions.

Thank you for the honor and pleasure of being a voice for you in the House of Representatives.

Take care,

Jeannie Darneille

State Representative, 27th District.



**Jeannie with House page Myranda Morris**

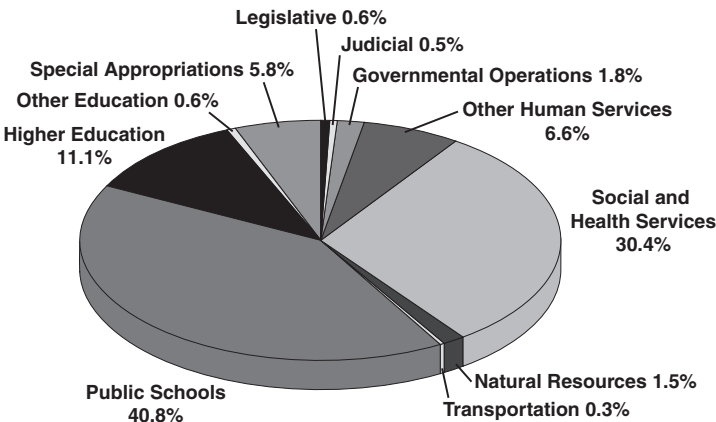
## The new state operating Budget

The new state operating budget that took effect in July is the best I've seen in many years. It makes smart investments in education, health care, our environment and other priorities that will serve us well:

- ◆ Schools in Tacoma, Fife and statewide will see much-improved state funding.
- ◆ Families and our economy will benefit from 9,700 new college opportunities and expanded financial aid. UW Tacoma will add roughly 480 students over two years.
- ◆ The budget expands health coverage to 38,000 additional Washington children. Our goal is for all Washington kids to have health coverage by 2010.
- ◆ Low-income seniors will get help with prescription drug costs not covered by Medicare.
- ◆ Millions of dollars were committed to cleaning up Puget Sound.
- ◆ New investments will protect our state's most vulnerable populations, including people with disabilities, frail retirees, the homeless, and low-income working families.
- ◆ More than \$1.6 million is being invested in the statewide asset building goals I authored. My previous newsletter described how these investments help low-income families become self-sufficient.

Importantly, we made these and other needed investments without raising taxes. In fact, the budget set aside \$724 million in savings for future needs. All in all, it is a prudent budget that invests in our future by investing in our people.

### Where the money goes, 2007-09 WA State Operating Budget





## Highlights of new laws

*Scores of new state laws went into effect in late July. Following are highlights of key changes that will directly affect businesses and families in the greater Tacoma area.*

### **“Fair share” for Pierce County in corrections.**

Pierce County Democrats and Republicans united to demand fairness in the location of criminal justice facilities and prison releases. A new law ensures that Pierce County will no longer receive more than our fair share of corrections facilities or prisoner releases. This victory is a good example that political cooperation produces good results.

**Prescription-drug help for seniors.** An important new law covers prescription drug co-pays for 95,000 low-income senior citizens in our state. This will fill dangerous gaps in the federal Medicare Part D drug program that led many seniors in the Medicaid program to put their health at risk by skipping medicines or cutting pills in half.

**Children’s Mental Health**—I’m extremely pleased that the blueprint I co-sponsored to create a children’s mental health system became law. It will emphasize cost-effective early treatment before problems lead to self-destructive or criminal behavior. More than 60 organizations united to make this victory for children’s health possible. Improving access to mental health services has been one of my priorities since 2001.

**Better cancer coverage.** To reduce preventable tragedies, a new state law directs health benefit plans to cover colorectal cancer exams and tests. Colorectal cancer kills 1,000 Americans each week—including many whose lives could have been saved by early detection and treatment of the cancer. Our new law will mean earlier diagnoses, earlier treatment and more lives saved.

**Respecting property rights.** Did you know that a scary legal loophole allowed governments to use the power of eminent domain to condemn private property without clear prior notice to the property owner? Fortunately, we closed that loophole with a new law that ensures property owners are notified before any such action can be taken.

**Domestic partnerships.** A new domestic partnership law ensures that gay and lesbian couples have a number of basic rights that everyone else takes for granted. This includes the right to inherit, the right to visit your partner in the hospital, and the right to make end-of-life decisions and funeral arrangements. This is an important step toward dismantling discrimination based on sexual orientation. I co-sponsored the House version of the law that passed.

**Telling parents about the free HPV vaccine.** Imagine: a vaccine that can prevent the human papilloma-virus which causes 70 percent of cervical cancer. Best of all, this vaccine is available for free to Washington’s children when their parents ask for it. I wrote the law that directs schools to tell parents about the virus and the availability of the vaccine. Cervical cancer was once the leading cause of death for American women and HPV also is a cause of infertility.

**Regulatory relief for small business.** State agencies must now make a greater effort to reduce the costs of state regulations on small businesses. The Executive Director for the Independent Business Association called this reform “a very important piece of legislation to address some of the costs of regulations.”

**Building college opportunities.** I co-sponsored the new College Opportunity Grant program. It will enable financially needy students who maintain decent grades to get funding for tuition and fees at the public community and technical college rate, plus \$1,000 per academic year for books, tools, and supplies. This will create life-changing opportunities for students in Tacoma, Ruston, Fife and across Washington.

**Clean Air/Clean Fuels** (Climate Change)—Thanks to the support of 21 leading environmental organizations and the business community, our state government will now promote clean, renewable energy while reducing the use of CO2-emitting dirty fossil fuels. The law passed with overwhelming bipartisan support.

**Banning PBDEs.** Washington’s nurses, pediatricians, environmentalists and fire chiefs asked for a ban on PBDE’s (Polybrominated diphenyl ethers) in flame retardants. I co-sponsored the law that phases out these chemicals, which are believed to create serious health and developmental risks for young children.

**Stamping out oil pollution.** To protect Puget Sound and its wildlife from being devastated by oil spills, we improved the oil-spill response system and dramatically increased fines on polluters—especially on big industrial polluters. In addition, a new Puget Sound Partnership started this month to lead Puget Sound cleanup efforts, and the new budget devotes millions to making the Sound healthy for future generations.

## Investing in local needs

Unlike the operating budget, the state capital budget focuses on long-term investments in construction, facilities, parks and state lands. This year’s capital budget is best known for making record investments in school construction. But teamwork between Pierce County lawmakers also made this an outstanding budget in terms of funding vital local projects. Here are some of my favorite local highlights.

### **Bates Technical College**

To help prepare even more students for the high-wage jobs of the future, lawmakers funded predesign work for a \$22 million Mohler Communication Technology Center to house all of its communications technology programs.

### **Thea Foss Waterway Seaport**

The Thea Foss Waterway offers tremendous potential for both industry and recreation. Lawmakers agreed to contribute \$300,000 toward building permanent moorage for vessels plus infrastructure to accommodate public events like the Tall Ships Festival along the waterway.



**Thea Foss Waterway**  
Photo credit: Annie Johnson

### **Tacoma Goodwill Center**

In a beautiful example of a public-private partnership, a \$1.5 million state investment will join private funds to build a new economic opportunity center on South 27th St. This center will triple Tacoma Goodwill Industry’s capacity to provide effective job training to disadvantaged Pierce County residents.

### **Tacoma Eastside Medical and Dental Clinic**

Residents in the Salishan and Eastside communities of Tacoma urgently need and will soon get better access to health care. Lawmakers agreed to help fund construction of a new medical and dental clinic that will serve 8,000 patients annually. A wide variety of funding sources will help make this much-needed clinic become a reality in 2008.

### **Hilltop Renaissance Project**

Lawmakers agreed to invest in the Hilltop Renaissance Project to energize development of local businesses and jobs. Our nearly \$6 million state investment is expected to leverage approximately four times that amount in other funds, which is a tribute to this outstanding economic development partnership between the Martin Luther King Housing Development Association and Centro Latino.

### **UW Tacoma**

We were able to secure \$6.5 million to launch work on new facilities that will create capacity for new and expanded degree programs to serve approximately 600 additional students. UW Tacoma is a community treasure that deserves strong state support.



**Beautiful University of Washington -Tacoma**

Photo credit: UW Tacoma

### **Korean Women’s Association**

A smart \$1.5 million investment will fund the purchase of the Olympus Hotel to provide a community building to serve homeless and low-income persons. This project, requested by the Korean Women’s Association, will create more than 100 jobs and provide 50 needed units of housing.

### **Cheney Stadium**

Washington’s five publicly-owned minor league baseball stadiums were granted funding for much-needed repairs and improvements. At 47-years old, Cheney Stadium is the oldest of these facilities and received \$2 million to upgrade safety and services.

### **Chinese Reconciliation Park**

Funding from the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program will match donations from private companies and foundations and the City of Tacoma to fund Phase 2 of the Chinese Reconciliation Park. This beautiful and thought-provoking park on the Ruston Way waterfront will draw visitors from around the world when it is completed.



**Part of the future Chinese Reconciliation Park**